Delegates to the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Desertification (INC-10) met in Working Group I to discuss the Global Mechanism, as well as in regional groups. Working Group I met briefly in the morning and for the first ninety minutes of the afternoon in formal session. The latter part of the afternoon was an informal meeting to enable the drafting of a new paragraph 4 (mobilizing financial resources), which is the outstanding text for that issue. Discussion of the Global Mechanism was based on Annex I of decision 9/6 contained in document A/51/76/Add.1.

Working Group I

The Chair of Working Group I, Mohamed Mahmoud ould El Ghaoouth (Mauritania), called the meeting to order and announced the Group’s agenda and organization of work. The Group will consider the Global Mechanism, administrative arrangements for the designation of a Permanent Secretariat, financial rules and programme and budget. Delegates agreed that Working Group II would meet Thursday and would not meet when Working Group I discusses programme and budget.

The Chair noted that, on designation, the G-77 and China have an official document on the matter (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.1), which was transmitted from previous meetings. On financial rules, the text is consensus language with one issue pending. The programme and budget issue is new and will be allocated to discuss the preliminary text. The Group therefore would not be able to aim at a definitive decision on this matter, but comments would be taken into account and a full-fledged budget would be submitted at the next stage.

On the Global Mechanism, he noted that INC-9 was close to a satisfactory solution regarding the mobilization of financial resources. The text on this issue is bracketed in the draft that was forwarded from INC-9. The three alternative versions for the paragraph were drafted by the G-77 and China, the OECD group of countries and the Chair. He asked delegates to try to arrive at a definitive decision and sought their flexibility.

The Netherlands, on behalf of the EU, emphasized that they are pleased with progress that was made at INC-9. He noted that agreement on the functions of the Global Mechanism in paragraphs 1 (collecting and disseminating information), 2 (analysing and advising on request), and 3 (promoting actions leading to cooperation and coordination) had been reached. He stated the EU’s assumption that the brackets around the entire text could be removed once agreement is reached on paragraph 4 (financial resources). The EU believes that the basis for this text should be found in the Convention. Article 21, paragraph 4, states that the Global Mechanism is to promote actions leading to the mobilization of financial resources, and does not provide for a new funding mechanism. The Global Mechanism could play a catalytic role in this area, whose operational ways and means could be explored by the Working Group. The EU supports the increased efficiency of use of existing resources, and believes the Global Mechanism could explore the possibility of innovative funding mechanisms and ways in which new funds could be raised.

In the afternoon, Tanzania, on behalf of the G-77 and CHINA, sought clarification from the EU regarding three points from its opening statement: (1) what is the “new mechanism” that is referred to?; (2) what does “the Global Mechanism playing a catalytic role” mean?; and (3) stating that no new mechanisms should be set up while proposing innovative mechanisms appears contradictory.

Benin concurred with the G-77 and China. He also noted that the sentence in the EU statement referring to the need for “efficiency and effectiveness of existing funds... to maximize their effects in the implementation of the CCD” and that the “GM could explore the possibility of finding innovative funding mechanisms...” are in consonance with the G-77 and China position at INC-9. Thus, there already is a basis on which the Group could begin negotiation.

The EU responded to the issues raised. The Convention does not provide for setting up a new mechanism for the implementation of projects and programmes, but enables the setting up of a mechanism that promotes a more effective way of spending existing funds and fund raising. He gave three examples of what could constitute “a catalytic role”: facilitating the availability of funds for projects to be funded; giving advice on how to find funds; and conducting feasibility studies. On the perceived contradiction between existing and innovative mechanisms, the US gave the examples of adapting the debt-for-nature-swaps concept to
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In the corridors II

March delegates commented on what they considered a change in the EU position regarding the Global Mechanism. The EU’s opening statement to Working Group I indicated that the Global Mechanism could have a catalytic role in promoting actions leading to the mobilization of resources in order to increase the effectiveness of existing financial mechanisms. A number of delegates welcomed this statement, although some were not clear as to whether the “catalytic role” implies fund raising. A number of delegates from developing countries noted that their priority is that the mechanism mobilizes resources not just facilitate the mobilization of resources. Some delegates are said to still be pushing for a fund with substantial resources.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

Some delegates commented on the slow start INCD-10 has had. First, only a brief opening plenary was held on Monday morning, 6 January, to allow for regional group consultations. Then the negotiations of Working Group II were postponed until Thursday, 9 January, to allow for full attention to the negotiations on the crucial Global Mechanism issue in Working Group I on Wednesday, 8 January, to allow for regional group consultations. Then the Chair said that the first reading of the text had been satisfactorily concluded and that negotiations would resume Thursday. He expected a core group of representatives from the G-77 and China and the OECD group of countries to remain for negotiations on Thursday evening, 9 January.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: The Group is expected to meet at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1 to continue consideration of the Global Mechanism. The Group will also meet at 3:00 pm. A core group is expected to meet in the evening to continue discussions on the Global Mechanism.

WORKING GROUP II: The Group is expected to meet at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm in Conference Room 2 to discuss rules of procedure and the communication of information and review of implementation.